

A Perfin Overview of the Netherlands

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An interesting sidelight of philately is the collection of stamps with perforated initials. In the United States these are called "perfins", stamps punched with identifying initials to prevent their theft or misuse. In the Netherlands, they are called "firmaperforaties."

Perfins were first used in Great Britain in 1868 and their use spread quickly throughout the European Continent. In the Netherlands they first came into use in 1875. Petrus Regout (P.R/M), Maastrick, a glass and ceramic manufacturer was the first Dutch company to use perforated stamps.

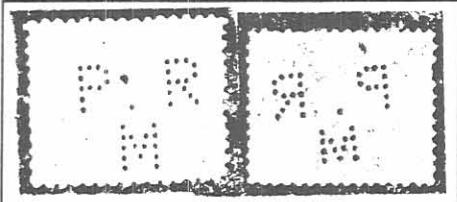


Figure 1. P.R/M Perfin

There were slightly more than 800 perfin patterns authorized by Dutch Postal Authorities; unfortunately no real records were kept. Some of the firm names and cities of use are unknown. Occasionally, a new perfin pattern is discovered. The definitive work on the perfins of the Netherlands is *Catalogus van de Perfins van Nederland en OG*, Jan L. Verhoeven, 1991, The Perfin Club Nederlands. The club is still seeking information to update the catalog.

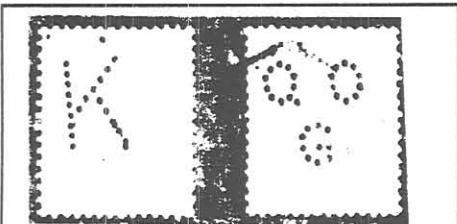


Figure 2

Several American company's used perfins for their operations in the Netherlands. Figure 2 illustrates the perfins of the Kodak Company and the Quaker Oats Granary. Figure 3 shows the perfins of

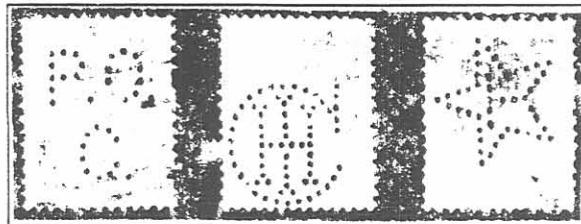


Figure 3

the Pure Oil Company, International Harvester and the Texaco Oil Company for their Dutch Operations.

The most highly sought Netherlands perfin is the windmill pattern shown in Figure 4. The perfin collector desires it for its striking pattern and the Windmill collector desires it for the windmill pattern punched into the stamp. The pattern was used by the firm of Eerste Nederlandsche Co-operative Kunstnestfabriek, a fertilizer manufacture located in the city of Vlaardingen.

Within the scope of perfins, the Dutch have what are called "POKO's." POKO is an acronym for Porto Kontroll Kasse. This is an automatic stamp affixing machine, manufactured in Germany. The device affixed stamps to envelopes at the rate of 80 to 120 envelopes per minute. The machine also perforated the stamps with the company's initial or logo. POKO's fall into three categories: pre-syncopated perfins, syncopated perfins, and post-syncopated perfins. In this instance, perfins relates to the separating perforations rather than the pattern. Stamps in these categories are shown in Figure 5.



Figure 4

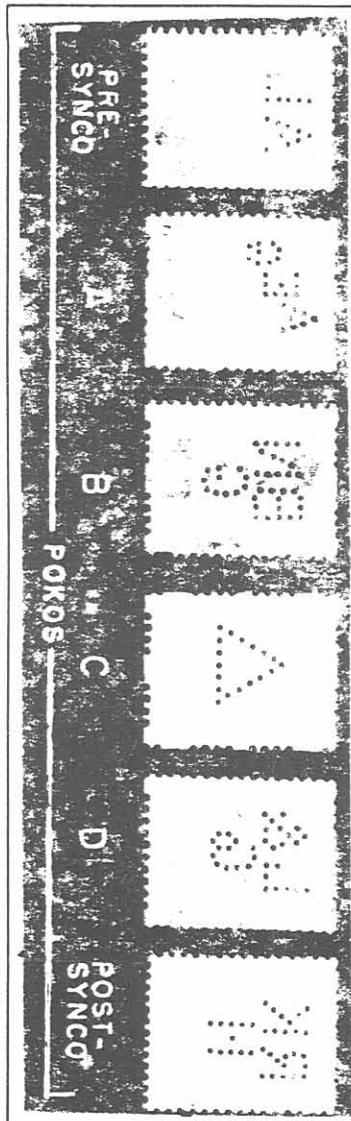


Figure 5